



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

August 18, 2003

The Honorable Ann M. Veneman
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250-1300

~~Ann:~~
Dear Secretary Veneman:

As you know, our agencies serve on the Interagency Transportation Infrastructure Streamlining Task Force that was created by Executive Order 13274, "Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Reviews." On May 6, 2003, as Chairman of the Task Force, I wrote to James Connaughton, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), asking for guidance on the roles of lead and cooperating agencies in reviewing and determining the "Purpose and Need" for a transportation project. On May 12, 2003, Chairman Connaughton responded with a letter that outlined the basic authority and responsibility of the lead agency for defining the purpose and need in any analysis required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Based on this exchange of correspondence, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration have co-authored an interim guidance memorandum on Purpose and Need statements. It is intended to assist our field office personnel in using the CEQ guidance as they coordinate the development of Purpose and Need statements for transportation NEPA documents. Please distribute this guidance to your senior managers and field staff.

I would appreciate your assistance in implementing this guidance and look forward to working with your agency to carry out its intent. In addition, the Interagency Task Force is examining how Purpose and Need statements are developed and used, and may make recommendations for further guidance in the future.

I look forward to working with you in implementing this interim guidance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Norman Y. Mineta', is written over a horizontal line.

Norman Y. Mineta

Enclosures